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# The Daily Star

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VOL. IV NO. 31 REGD. NO. DA 781 FAIGUN 2, 1400 BS, DHAKA MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1994 RAMADAN 2, 1414 HIJRI 12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 4.00

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## Meeting in Washington tomorrow WB to study \$450m loan proposals on JMB, jute

**Star Report**

Nearly 450 million US dollars in loan proposals for the Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge (JMB) and the Jute Sector Adjustment Credit is scheduled to be placed for approval before the World Bank board of governors' meeting in Washington tomorrow.

Approval of the loans by the World Bank board is seen as crucial and as a last hurdle in the prolonged efforts to get these two mega projects off the ground.

Officials in Dhaka are confident that the loans would be approved without any problems as the negotiations have already been successfully completed.

Memoranda of understandings have been signed, late last year, between the government and the Bank relating to funding the projects.

The bank has agreed, in principle, to provide 200 million dollars towards co-financing the 700 million dollar Jamuna Bridge Project. The Asian Development Bank and Japan have also agreed to provide 200 million dollars each while the government would fund the remainder of the project costs.

The World Bank has also agreed to provide a 250 million dollar loan, through its soft-arm lending affiliate the International Development Agency (IDA), for the jute sector adjustment credit (JSAC).

The feasibility study of the ambitious Jamuna Bridge Project was originally initiated during the early 70s, envisaging to link the eastern part of the country with the underdeveloped western portion.

The project was earnestly revived in 1991 while the de-

## Tk 5 cr project to contain rheumatic diseases

A Taka five crore "National Centre for Control of Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Diseases" project will be implemented to contain rheumatic diseases, reports BSS.

The decision to set up the centre in Dhaka was taken at a review meeting of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare yesterday with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

Held at the International Conference Centre (ICC), the meeting discussed the health services in government hospitals and underlined the need for improving the services.

The meeting expressed satisfaction over the progress of the ongoing development projects of Annual Development Programme (ADP) for the year 1993-94 under the

## Cabinet body okays PSC for gas, oil exploration

**By Staff Correspondent**

The Cabinet Committee for Finance and Economic Affairs yesterday approved the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) of the Cairn Energy PLC of Scotland and Holland Sea Search of the Netherlands for oil and gas exploration in the Bay of Bengal.

The much-delayed contract would allow the foreign companies to explore oil and gas in the Bay off the coast of the Cox's Bazar-Sandwip region covering an area of 821 sq kilometre including a 242 sq km Kutubdia gas field.

The Chairman of the seven-member Cabinet Committee, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman presided over the meeting.

Energy Minister, Dr Khandker Mosharraf Hossain,

## Bangladesh bowl out Argentina for 120 in ICC championship

**Sports Reporter**

An anticipated auspicious start for the touring Bangladesh national cricket team in the ICC Trophy championship melted into procrastination in the Kenyan capital Nairobi yesterday as elemental wrath in the form of rain, that has been dogging cricket's World Championship at a micro-level since its start on Saturday, allowed only one innings to be completed.

The Bangladeshi bowlers lived upto expectations by skittling out the cricket team from Argentina — better known for its soccer and the one and only Diego Maradona — for a paltry 120 runs after skipper Faruque Ahmed won the toss and decided to field.

Under the rules, Bangladesh will bat today to complete the match. But, should a resumption of the game become impossible because of the weather, then the two teams will share the points.

Such a situation would be a big setback for second-seeded Bangladesh because they are hoping to make it to the World Championship proper in two years' time by securing a place among the top three finishers of the ICC competition. [Detailed report on Page 10.]

## JS debates Lalbagh carnage BNP denies blame

**By Staff Correspondent**

The Opposition bench in the Jatiya Sangsad (JS) yesterday accused the ruling party of direct involvement in the recent Lalbagh killings. The treasury bench, on the other hand, blamed the Opposition for politicising the issue to maximise political gain out of the tragic incident.

Taking part in an inconclusive debate on the post-mayoral polls violence in the Lalbagh area of the capital January 31 which claimed six lives, legislators on both sides of the floor, however, expressed their deep shock at incident and unanimously agreed that the killers must be brought to book and duly punished.

Originally scheduled for an hour, the debate dragged on for over 110 minutes yesterday and will continue today to accommodate the speeches of

## 'All political cases during Ershad's rule will be withdrawn'

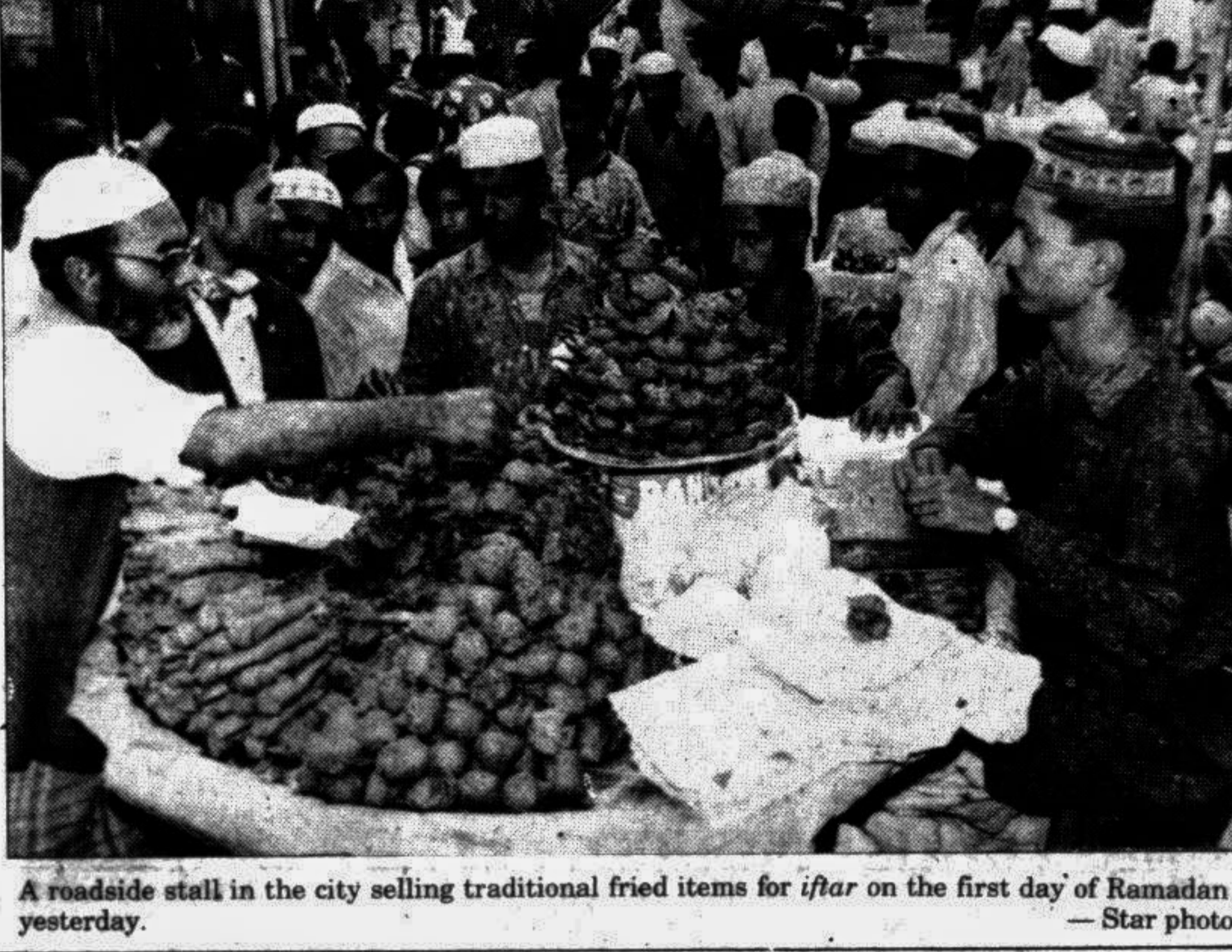
**By Staff Correspondent**

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury yesterday told Parliament that all the 'political cases' lodged during the martial law of deposed President HM Ershad, would be withdrawn.

The announcement came when a number of opposition MPs, made a loud protest against a recent notification of a special tribunal which asked 16 former student leaders to appear before the court to face the charges.

The accused included KM Jahangir MP, Mostofa Jalal Mohiuddin, Mukul Bose, Hasib Khan, Fazle Hossain Badsha — all of whom were charged under Special Powers Act for their political activities in 1982.

Rising on a point of order immediately after the ques-



A roadside stall in the city selling traditional fried items for iftar on the first day of Ramadan yesterday. — Star photo



SPRING IS HERE: Students of the Fine Arts Institute of Dhaka University brought out a colourful procession in the city yesterday — the first day of the Bangla calendar month Falgun, which symbolises the arrival of spring in this part of the world. — Star photo

## Team from city due in Ctg to probe BPC move

**From Staff Correspondent**

CHITTAGONG, Feb 13: A high-powered team from Dhaka will arrive here tomorrow to probe the recent move by the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) to appoint a private shipping company for transportation of its imported crude oil.

According to an official source, the investigation team includes Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Energy Jamal Hossain, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Finance Shamsuzzaman Chowdhury and Deputy Secretary of the Energy Ministry Yasin Meah.

The Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation recently entered into a contract with a private shipping firm for transportation of crude oil imported by it.

Earlier BSC vessels used to carry the imported crude.

## One held with gold worth Tk 40 lakh

**By Staff Correspondent**

Railway Police, acting on a tip-off, arrested one person at the city's Kamalapur railway station with 600 tolas of gold bar worth Tk 40 lakh late Saturday night.

Police said a Sythet-bound passenger, Mohammad Zakir Uddin Ahmed, was carrying 60 gold bars each weighing 10 tolas hidden inside a belt around his waist.

## Commentary The media taken for a ride

**By Mahfuz Anam**

Free media's basic weakness is that it is vulnerable to manipulations. The vulnerability increases manifold if the string is pulled from positions of power and authority. A free media's own compulsions of competition, and relentless race to be the first with the news, further accentuate our vulnerability. The just-concluded instance of the reporting of the so-called resignation of the Attorney General, Aminul Haq, is a case in point. It is something from which the media should learn a lesson.

With the issuance of our much-talked about Attorney General's signed statement on Saturday that 'The reports appearing in the newspapers about my resignation are not correct. I have excellent working relationship with the government,' the controversy about his position comes to a well-deserved and a not-too-soon, end.

But with that very statement, several other questions arise, and we need to answer them for the sake of the credibility of the media. My first question is, if the story of his resignation is not correct, then where did it originate from? Did the media make it up? If we did, then we owe our readers our most fervent apology. But on the other hand, if the origin of the story was deliberate, and then no attempt was made to clarify it, then obviously somebody needs to answer some questions.

Mr Haq said he never resigned. However, in the item issued by News and Feature Service (a newly set up news agency) and used by many papers (including The Star), he is quoted to have said: 'I never hankered after the office of AG... It is not possible for me to carry on my responsibility under the prevailing adverse situation. That is why I have resigned.' A similar story was credited by the UNB news agency quoting Supreme Court Bar sources. The Daily Ittefaq's lead story said that Mr Haq had called a few journalists to his office chamber and informed them about his decision to resign. This happened on Thursday evening, The Star, and many other papers tried to reach Mr Haq for confirmation. But he was unavailable. So Friday's paper carried the story of his proposed resignation.

Throughout Friday we, from the media, tried all sources to confirm the story. Several papers quoted Mr Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, the Additional Attorney General, saying that Mr Haq had written a letter of resignation, left it with him, to be sent to the President on Saturday. AG office sources

said similar things. Frantic efforts by the media to reach Mr Haq produced no results. His family told The Star that Mr Haq was 'living with a relative in Uttara, and could not be reached. So Saturday, again, the story about Mr Haq's resignation dominated the front pages of the national dailies.

Now that Mr Haq says that the press story about his resignation was all wrong, we, on behalf of the media, and for the sake of credibility of the media, would like to pose the following questions to Mr Aminul Haq:

1) When you saw so many national dailies carrying news about your resignation, which you now say was not correct, why did you not issue a denial? You may say, since you did not (according to you) give the story, so why should you deny it. But you are a man of law. You are the highest legal officer of the government. How could you permit such speculation about yourself to continue (especially if it is not true, as you say), without setting the record straight?

2) Why was it that you, who is well known, and therefore very much appreciated, for your accessibility by the press, suddenly became unavailable, especially when such a 'wrong' (as you now claim) information was being spread?

See Page 12 Col 4

## Shutdown of mills posing threat to economy: Hasina

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the shutting down of mills and factories and retrenchment of workers are posing a threat to the national economy, reports UNB.

'It's the policy of the BNP regime to close down mills and factories, sack workers and deprive them of their just wages,' Hasina told a delegation of CBA leaders of the Paksey Paper Mills and Ishwardi Alhaj Textile Mills.

The elected CBA leaders met Hasina, also the Awami League president at her 29 Minto Road residence and apprised her of various problems prevailing in the country's industrial belt.

They particularly referred to the plight of workers caused by the government policy of retrenchment and denial to pay their dues.

The delegation was led by CBA vice-president Babul Haq, Ishwardi Sramik League president Rashidullah Jahangir Alam, Ahsan Ali, Saifur Rahman, Atiar Rahman, Paksey Union Parishad chairman Habibur Islam, Abdul Hannan and Shabbir Khan.

## Import of diesel HC issues rule on NBR, ministry

**By Staff Correspondent**

The High Court division yesterday issued a rule nisi on the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and others, including the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, to show cause within seven days as to why the directive relating to the discharging of diesel oil by an importer should not be declared illegal.

The rule was issued by a division bench consisting of Justice Md Ismail Uddin Sarker and Justice Md Hamidul Huq on an application of QC Petroleum Limited.

The petitioner imported 16,315 metric tons of high speed diesel from Singapore under the existing import policy order of 1993-95. After assessment of duty by the Collector of Customs and after partial payment was made, the NBR directed the customs authority to stop discharge of the consignment.

The show cause notice asked the NBR and others, including the Energy Ministry, as to why the memo dated January 5 directing that the diesel imported by the plaintiff cannot be discharged unless a no-objection certificate is produced from the Energy Ministry or the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, should not be declared to have been passed without any lawful authority and therefore of no legal effect.

Considering the urgency of the matter the respondents have been directed by the court to show cause within a week. The court also agreed, as prayed for, to consider an interim direction relating to the discharge of the cargo, today in the presence of the Attorney General.

## US, Dutch diplomats' families evacuated Sarajevo truce talks waver

SARAJEVO, Feb 13: In a series of ominous signs, senior Bosnian Serb commanders failed to show up Sunday for cease-fire talks, and US Embassy officials sent their families home, reports AP.

The evacuations in Yugoslavia came as Bosnian Serbs in Sarajevo rejected a UN plan to turn over their heavy weapons ringing the city. The Serbs said the plan gave an advantage to the Muslim-dominated government's ground troops.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has threatened to launch air strikes against Serb gunners if they don't withdraw their big arms from a 20-kilometer radius of downtown Sarajevo by midnight Feb. 20.

While the Serbs have rejected NATO's ultimatum, their guns have been almost silent since Thursday. One artillery round was fired Sunday, and there were no injuries.

**Earlier Story on Page 5**

Later in the day, it appeared a compromise was struck with UN mediators. The Serbs turned over five artillery pieces at the UN-monitored Serb barracks of Mokro, southeast of the capital.

The Serbs have now agreed to allow their heavy weapons to be collected at their brigades rather than at central UN monitoring points, said Maj. Jose Labandeira, a UN spokesman.

Meanwhile, the members of the families of US and Dutch Embassy officials in Belgrade today joined a growing exodus from Belgrade amid rising fears over the repercussions of NATO airstrikes in neighbouring Bosnia.

As the countdown to a February 21 deadline which could unleash air strikes against Bosnian Serbs continued, 26 US women and children were to be evacuated during the day, a spokesman for the US Embassy said.

The US nationals, who left Belgrade in about 20 vehicles in light snow this morning, were evacuated following a

## Biman to buy 2 second-hand airbuses

An international tender will be floated within this month to procure two second-hand airbuses (Airbus 310-300), for the Bangladesh Biman, reports UNB.

A decision to this effect was taken in a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Purchase with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in the chair.

The finance minister directed the authorities concerned to complete all procedures of the purchase within the next 90 days.

It was also decided that purchase of the two airbuses would be financed from the government's own funds.

## Accord with ADB for \$ 80m railway credit soon

**By Sharier Khan**

An eighty million US dollar Railway Recovery Programme (RRP) credit agreement between the Government of Bangladesh and the Asian Development Bank is likely to be signed within a month, after much delay.

The agreement was due to be signed last December but the signing was delayed due to a top level change in the management of the ADB at its Manila headquarters, said a source.

Although the delay had not affected the RRP, initiated by the government in 1991-92, it had delayed the signing of an agreement on a railway double line project between Bangladesh Railway (BR) and Ger-

**Property worth Tk 10 lakh gutted**

**From Our Correspondent**

SYLHET, Feb 13: Property worth about Taka ten lakh was gutted in a big fire that broke out at Islampur Bazar of Kotwali thana in the early hours yesterday. According to the fire brigade, the blaze originated from an electric short circuit in the Nazim Automatic Rice Mills at about 4 am.

Sohri, Iftar timings			
Rmdn	Feb	Sohri	Iftar
02	14	—	5:59 pm
03	15	5:10 am	6:00 pm
04	16	5:10 am	6:00 pm